

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 2 and 4 and add new claims 5-7 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A function maintaining method for a fuel cell system, the fuel cell system including a fuel cell that is supplied a fuel and an oxidant to generate electricity, a fuel tank that supplies the fuel to said fuel cell, and a tank pressure sensor that detects a pressure of said fuel tank, comprising the steps of:

calculating, when a failure of said tank pressure sensor has been detected, the pressure of the fuel tank before a predetermined time interval from the time of this detection-the failure of said tank pressure sensor, and a fuel consumption amount and a fuel discharge amount after the detection of said failure, and

and-estimating the pressure of the fuel tank according to said fuel consumption amount and said fuel discharge amount.

2. (currently amended) A function maintaining method for a fuel cell system according to claim 1, further comprising the step of stopping generation of electricity ofby said fuel cell when the estimated pressure of the fuel tank becomes equal to or less than a predetermined value.

3. (original) A function maintaining method for a fuel cell system according to claim 1, wherein said fuel cell system further comprises a discharge valve that controls a fuel discharge amount of the fuel cell, and wherein said fuel discharge amount is governed according to presence or absence of fuel discharge processing that opens said discharge valve.

4. (currently amended) A function maintaining method for a fuel cell system according to claim 1, wherein said fuel cell system further comprises a temperature sensor that detects a temperature of said fuel cell, and wherein said fuel consumption amount and said fuel discharge amount are governed based on the temperature detected by said temperature sensor.

5. (new) A function maintaining method for a fuel cell system according claim 1, further comprising the step of controlling the fuel discharge amount from said fuel cell.

6. (new) A function maintaining method for a fuel cell system according claim 1, further comprising the step of detecting a temperature of said fuel cell.

7. (new) A function maintaining method for a fuel cell system according claim 6, further comprising the step of controlling the fuel discharge amount in response to the temperature of the fuel cell.